

CITY OF BELLEVUE
BELLEVUE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
MINUTES

June 8, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
City Council Conference Room 1E-113

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Commissioners Bishop, Chirls, Lampe, Woosley, Wu

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Kevin McDonald, Mike Ingram- Department of Transportation; Bradley Calvert- Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: None

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Bishop who presided.

2. ROLL CALL

Upon the call of the roll, all Commissioners were present.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

5. COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS - None

6. DRAFT MINUTES REVIEW/APPROVAL

A. April 13, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Lampe. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chirls and the motion carried unanimously.

B. May 11, 2017

A motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

Principal Planner Kevin McDonald explained that though the minutes of the March 23, 2017, Commission meeting were approved at the May 11, 2017, meeting, the chair overlooked

signing them. He sought from the Commission a motion to allow Commissioner Bishop sign them instead.

A motion to allow Commissioner Bishop to sign the March 23, 2017, meeting minutes as previously approved was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

7. STUDY SESSION

A. Wilburton-Grand Connection Study Update

Mr. McDonald introduced Bradley Calvert with the Planning and Community Development Department who has been working with the Wilburton-Grand Connection CAC.

Mr. Calvert said the Wilburton and Grand Connection projects, while distinct, are being treated as one. The Grand Connection project is focused on developing a non-motorized ped/bike corridor extending from Meydenbauer Bay through the downtown and across I-405 to the Wilburton commercial area. It is expected to be a catalyst for the Wilburton commercial area as it revisions to a new urban neighborhood. The visioning process has been under way for about a year, while the CAC process has been under way for six months.

Mr. Calvert said a lot of infrastructure improvements are planned to come into the Wilburton commercial area, including East Link light rail, the Eastside Rail Corridor non-motorized trail running north and south, and the Grand Connection non-motorized facility running east and west. The Wilburton commercial area lies squarely between the BelRed and downtown, two high-growth areas. There are a lot of big changes coming, including the Global Innovation Exchange, REI corporate headquarters, and the overall growth of the area, all of which makes Wilburton prime to be the next urban neighborhood for Bellevue.

The boundary of the Wilburton commercial area changed several times prior to the launch of the project. It grew in response to the transportation infrastructure that is going into the area, especially the Eastside Rail Corridor which will help frame what the area will look like. The Wilburton segment of the Eastside Rail Corridor is expected to be the most used segment of the entire route that connects from Renton to Woodinville. The four East Link light rail stations will place the entire Wilburton study area within a 15- minute walk to a light rail station.

The City Council established the principles to guide the study process. The list begins with ensuring that Wilburton will capitalize on all the special opportunities. That will lead to identifying Wilburton's unique niche and opportunities. The principles also include developing a strong urban identity; integrating transit-oriented development planning; identifying community benefit; identifying opportunities for affordable housing; producing economic vitality; ensuring that the timing of the planning process aligns with all the planned improvements; and complementing rather than competing with the downtown. The CAC has 15 members, including members of the Transportation Commission, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Community Services Board, and several residents. The topics of discussion include land use, transportation, urban design, character and implementation strategies. The group is tasked with developing three alternatives: no action, high growth and aggressive growth. The environmental impact statement process is running simultaneously.

An online survey was launched to generate comments from the public about how they see the

area. The responses included Wilburton as being different from the downtown; a place for community oriented business; inclusion of middle range housing; a place for incubator and tech startup space; incorporating parks and open space; transit and trail oriented development; and diversity.

Running parallel to the CAC process is a property owners panel. Three or four key meetings have been identified that will invite their direct involvement in the form of workshops. The concept is to produce a vision that everyone can share. The panel is open to business owners in the area as well.

Commissioner Chirls noted that he owns a business in the area and was not aware of the property and business owners panel. Commissioner Woosley added that his company also owns a business as well as four buildings in the study area. He said the process has gone very well to date.

Mr. Calvert said land use density and building height have been the focus of the CAC over the last three meetings. A transect coloring exercise kicked off the discussion using existing building typologies. The members were asked to identify where the various building types and heights would be appropriate in the Wilburton study area. The transect ranged from single family to DT-O1 zoning. Typically, CAC studies rely on bubble diagrams, but the consultant is using a design computational pool which takes bubble diagrams and translates them into 3D models to better understand the physical impacts of the proposals. The 3D modeling can be done on the spot, which allows for testing before committing.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Lampe about having lower building heights closer to the freeway, Mr. Calvert explained that the area through which light rail will pass is being referred to by the CAC as the urban center. As envisioned, that area will have the greatest height and density, with buildings up to 250 feet tall. The areas immediately surrounding the urban center will have buildings that step down in height to about 160 feet, and the areas adjacent to those areas will have buildings only about 100 feet tall. There has not been a conscious effort to make buildings close to the freeway shorter, which is the current approach in the downtown. Things will become more refined as the process moves forward.

Mr. Calvert said the property owners' version of height and density also placed an urban core along 116th Avenue NE between NE 4th Street and NE 8th Street with buildings up to 450 feet, but extended the urban center boundaries nearly the whole length of and east of 116th Avenue NE in which the buildings would be up to 250 feet. The public and the CAC have agreed that 116th Avenue NE should be a signature boulevard. To the east of the urban center the buildings step down first to 160 feet and then to 100 feet.

Compositionally, both approaches make good sense. There are some obvious major differences in terms of total density and square footage that will be evaluated through the EIS process and in a market analysis. Overall, the area will have less development than the downtown, which is currently only about 65 percent built out.

Commissioner Woosley noted that the proposal is still preliminary. While similar to the downtown in the staggered height and density approach, the total development in Wilburton will be less than in the downtown.

Commissioner Wu said the CAC has been clear about wanting an urban village that will serve a diverse population.

Mr. Calvert said transportation is a major element of the work being done by the CAC. There are obviously big improvements coming and with them will come the opportunity to change the character of streets. The primary focus is on what role light rail, the Grand Connection and the Eastside Rail Corridor will play in terms of turning the area into a multimodal hub. There have already been some significant improvements made, including NE 4th Street and 120th Avenue NE. There is very little flexibility, however, to add major new roads to the area. The CAC is focused on the proposed NE 6th Street extension and how that could impact the study area, as well as the Eastside Rail Corridor crossings and the character of 116th Avenue NE. Permeability through the blocks has emerged as a key issue, especially in the middle of the study area, to create more of an urban environment.

Commissioner Woosley commented that while the Spring District does not have any real connections to the city's grid system, it actually has an very robust internal grid system. He asked if a similar approach is being considered for Wilburton, maybe through a master plan approach. Mr. Calvert said the consultant has provided three ideas for how to address the defining transportation feature in the study area. The first envisioned 116th Avenue NE as a signature boulevard with connections to the Eastside Rail Corridor. The second focuses on east-west connections, while the third focuses on breaking up the blocks with alleys with addresses rather than with streets, which is similar to the Spring District.

Commissioner Bishop asked if the NE 2nd Street crossing of the freeway and the Main Street upgrade part of the CAC's thinking. Mr. Calvert said neither will figure into the decision-making process. Some of those things will be factored into the EIS, but will not be deciding factors. Mr. McDonald added that the EIS and the project timeline have a 2035 planning horizon. The projects that are reasonably foreseeable and that have some design concepts and/or some funding commitment will be included for purposes of traffic analysis. For purposes of long-range planning, projects that may not be built within the planning horizon can be included in a list of projects that might be desirable to support the land use.

Commissioner Woosley commented that land use decisions and questions around development capacity will be limited by what was included in the EIS analysis. He suggested that by not including a full list of projects in the EIS, the envisioned land use may not be achievable without going back and doing another analysis. All projects that are reasonable to consider should be in the mix.

Commissioner Bishop said his concern was that the grand vision for the Wilburton planning area includes far more than 20 years' worth of growth, while there is no grand vision for how to accommodate the growth with a transportation system. Mr. Calvert cautioned against taking the graphics as exactly what will happen. He stressed that the process remains in an early stage. Commissioner Bishop said while that may be the case, every block in each of the alternatives is filled up, maybe not in 20 years but certainly in 50 years, and there needs to be a plan for how to address the transportation needs. Mr. Calvert reiterated that there are many things yet to be worked out. He pointed out that the graphics showing the northwest corner of the study area north of NE 8th Street and west of the Eastside Rail Corridor indicate no changes in zoning from what is currently on the books. There is also a gap and some already rezoned areas in the northeast part of the study area, and there are other evaluative factors that need to be considered, including the likelihood of properties redeveloping.

Commissioner Woosley stressed the need to consider the ultimate capacity of the transportation system and relate it to the full buildout being considered. That would represent

a comprehensive analysis.

Commissioner Wu asked why transportation planning does not look out more than 20 years. Mr. McDonald said the farther out one attempts to look, the less reliable are the assumptions made, and thus, how they will play out. That is owed in part to how quickly transportation technologies change. Transportation analyses seek to compare alternatives relative to each other to determine which will have the highest impact on the transportation system.

Commissioner Chirls said while that is probably true, the decisions made relative to land use and transportation will have repercussions for 60 years or more. Commissioner Bishop agreed and said if no consideration is given to how to handle transportation issues that far out, the city will in effect be boxed in. Mr. McDonald said the alternative is to develop different approaches for moving people around through more efficient use of the existing rights-of-way. That is in fact what has been happening. The total volume of traffic on many arterials in Bellevue has not increased since 1990, yet the land use has increased all around.

Mr. Calvert said the next steps will include development of the draft EIS, refining the alternatives, selecting alternatives and addressing urban design and open space before moving on to implementation.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that the first thing done in travel model forecasting is defining the network, which defines the baseline. Mr. McDonald said the baseline for the final EIS may change given input from the CAC and the public. Commissioner Bishop noted that for the downtown a baseline set of transportation assumptions as well as additional projects in a build scenario were established at the same time and he asked if the Wilburton process has both. Mr. McDonald said it does not currently have both. The difference is that the Wilburton study includes an EIS process which the downtown did not have. The EIS process is more iterative and the final EIS may include recommended transportation network assumptions that are different than the baseline.

Commissioner Woosley suggested it would make more sense to have a broader scope of projects that can reasonably be anticipated in the draft EIS and then narrow it down in the final version rather than going in the opposite direction. Mr. McDonald agreed the approach might be reasonable. He said he would be meeting with the transportation consultants the morning of June 9 and would seek their response. Mr. Calvert added that the prescribed list of projects will be sent out to the CAC prior to their next meeting, and all of that information will be publicly available.

Commissioner Bishop commented that the relatively new concept of having a companion ramp from 116th Avenue NE connecting to southbound I-405 would have a tremendous impact on the whole south end of the planning area. The project is not funded or indeed in any of Bellevue's planning documents, but WSDOT is talking about it. The project should be included in the planning process.

Mr. Calvert said the CAC process is slated to wrap up in January 2018. The first and second quarter of 2018 will include looking at code amendments.

Turning to the Grand Connection, Mr. Calvert shared with the Commissioners the primary route map and noted that also in the mix for consideration are specific routes for cyclists and alternative transportation options. He said the process began with an early visioning public engagement process. The initial designs have been refined. A draft framework report will be

released soon. Currently, final renderings of the I-405 crossing are being completed. The consultant was tasked with developing three alternatives for how to cross the freeway. They came up a serpentine-like bridge that would build on existing infrastructure using cross-laminated timbers, which would give a unique character to the bridge; a utilitarian approach that would still create the opportunity to screen the sights and sounds of the freeway with vegetated berms; and the notion of covering portion of the freeway between NE 4th Street and NE 6th Street to create public space and connectivity.

The draft framework report is slated to be released in a presentation to Council on June 19. It will include a body of recommendations for the segment of the route from Meydenbauer Bay to City Hall. The I-405 crossing will be evaluated as part of the Wilburton EIS process. The document will be open to the public for review over the course of the summer, after which adoption of it will be sought.

B. Transportation Management Program Review

Senior Transportation Planner Michael Ingram said the recommendation of staff relative to the next phase of stakeholder outreach was to conduct an online open house, similar to the approach taken in the summer of 2016 in looking at options for how to structure the revisions to the code requirements. The method allows for conveying a fair amount of information and getting feedback in various ways. An updated version of the mailing list previously used will be relied on to call attention to the online open house.

Mr. Ingram said there are two key issues in need of stakeholder input. The first is the Transportation Management Program performance goals. The recommendation is to look at the results from Commute Trip Reduction work sites as being in the aggregate representative of what is realistically achievable performance. He allowed that in previously reviewing the performance goals, the Commission indicated a more aggressive target might be appropriate.

Commissioner Wu said she would like to see goals that are more aspirational. She added that there is no punishment for failing to meet the performance goals. Mr. Ingram said it will be communicated that the expectation is that progress must be made toward achieving the goals.

Commissioner Woosley stressed the need to make the goals realistic and equitable. The goals are not just something to strive for, they have real effects on those who build buildings. They must come up with a plan, but even if asked to put on the table a plan that realistically cannot be achieved, they may not receive a certificate of occupancy. The goals should be realistic and the city should do all it can to help people achieve the goals.

At the request of Commissioner Woosley, Mr. Ingram explained that there are issues with the current framework under which buildings are required to sign on to a performance goal that in many cases is not achievable. The proposed approach seeks to fix that. He allowed that to date there has not been a clear buy-in from all Commissioners relative to the new approach. He suggested additional stakeholder input is needed before reaching any conclusions. Commissioner Woosley said there has been agreement in terms of improving the outcomes, but not in terms of what the level of attainment should be and what tools should be used to get there.

Commissioner Woosley agreed with the need for stakeholders to comment on the key issues of performance goals and implementation activities.

Mr. Ingram said what he had heard to date with regard to implementation activities was a desire to be less prescriptive and more flexible in choosing the best fit for a particular building or tenant. He said some activities simply must be done in order to have a program that works, including having a transportation coordinator at the building to talk to and who is responsible for overseeing the program, there must be periodic surveys to measure performance at buildings. In considering the actual program activities that might influence travel behavior and encourage non drive-alone trips, the current requirements were reviewed and some were found to be more substantive than others. The suggestion is that the activities should be divided into two groups, those with higher impacts and those with lower impacts. The overall proposal for the framework going forward is to set the expectations for what a building is supposed to do in terms of level of effort and level of implementation at the same level as the current code.

Referring to the chart indicating the required baseline activities, Mr. Ingram said the recommendation of the staff was to boost the highlighted square footage thresholds to match the column for providing a building transportation coordinator.

Commissioner Wu asked if the square footage thresholds assumed a certain number of workers or trips. Mr. Ingram said there may have been some assumptions when the code was established in 1995. Back in the 1980s there were even smaller buildings that were conditioned with TMP-like requirements. Over time it has been recognized that some of the requirements are not necessary for smaller sites.

Commissioner Woosley commented that it is easy to post and distribute information in a building. He asked what it means to provide a building transportation coordinator. Mr. Ingram said there is a description of each element in the implementation guidelines. The building transportation coordinator position is all about having someone responsible for overseeing and implementing the program, including completing the monitoring reports, being available as a resource for workers on site, and facilitating the formation of carpools. The position can be filled by contract and does not have to be someone from in house.

Mr. Ingram explained that identifying parking cost as a separate line item in tenant leases, and leases in which tenants are required to participate in periodic surveys, have previously only been required in the downtown. Going forward, the proposal is to require them citywide. The latter item is a necessary element for the performance monitoring and building managers have highlighted how helpful it is to have the requirement in tenant leases.

With regard to the actual implementation measures around encouraging and supporting non drive-alone modes, Mr. Ingram said the city currently requires a financial incentive in the amount of \$15 per month for those who carpool, vanpool or use transit. The recommendation going forward is to provide more flexibility and more options. Buildings larger than 50,000 square feet would, under the proposal, have to choose one Tier 1 option (providing financial incentives, providing a shuttle van or bus, and providing high-impact flexible parking) and two Tier 2 options (providing a guaranteed ride home, providing preferential HOV parking, providing low-impact flexible parking options, and conducting an annual transportation options event).

Commissioner Woosley pointed out that the number of employees per square foot in office buildings has been steadily increasing over the years. That is not necessarily the case in a light industry building, and in fact it could be only a fifth the density of employees per square foot. An office building is likely to generate far more trips, yet the requirements for each are the same under the proposal. It would be better the shift light industry over into the manufacturing

assembly column, or be given a separate column. TMP activities are most successful in the buildings that have the most employees per square foot.

Commissioner Chirls raised the notion of looking at number of employees rather than building square footage. Commissioner Bishop said that approach would not work because it is tenant dependent. Development permits are based on square footage, not the number of employees, and the conditions get set at the time of development.

Commissioner Wu said one option might be for tenants of buildings to have apps that connect them with others who work in the building to form carpools and vanpools. Mr. Ingram said that would fall under the dynamic carpooling category. The approach is starting to get some traction in some areas. What is not clear yet is what role the property manager would play beyond promoting the apps.

Commissioner Chirls said he could not see a property manager implementing something like that, though a company certainly could. Commissioner Woosley said it certainly is something a TDM professional serving a building could offer as part of sharing information. There is some redundancy with the state Commute Trip Reduction program. That program should be allowed to do its thing and let the local program pick up the rest of it.

Mr. Ingram said the city currently prescribes offering a guaranteed ride home for a number of land uses, along with preferential HOV parking. The latter can, according to building managers, be difficult to implement and monitor. Additional flexibility is needed and the proposal identifies the provision of secure covered bicycle parking, shower facilities, off-street passenger loading area, parking on-site for careshare vehicles, and an annual TMP services contact with TMA as additional options.

Mr. Ingram said he would put the proposal out for stakeholder feedback. He said he hoped to have feedback in hand by the Commission's July meeting. With regard to the implementation guidelines, Mr. Ingram allowed that they should be more fully fleshed out by the next meeting. The schedule calls for wrapping up the Commission's work on the Transportation Management Program in September and transmit it to the Council.

8. OLD BUSINESS – None

9. NEW BUSINESS – None

10. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Pamela Johnson, 3741 122nd Avenue NE, voiced support for the city's tree canopy policies in the Comprehensive Plan that state the city should already have at least 40 percent tree canopy. What is missing is a master plan for making sure that happens. The issue of street trees falls under the responsibility of the Commission. Puget Sound Energy says it will save 300 street trees near the 115,000 volt transmission line in east Bellevue. On June 14, the Planning Commission will take testimony regarding the Bellevue Technology Center Comprehensive Plan amendment. The Bellevue Technology Center is at 156th Avenue NE and NE 24th Street where the level of service is at LOS E or worse, and as proposed the amendment would result in the loss of even more trees. She said she attended a symposium at the University of Washington where the need to pay close attention to tree plans was stressed, especially street trees.

11. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Woosley said he took the opportunity on June 7 to attend the Eastside Rail Corridor regional advisory council meeting in Kirkland. He said the meeting focused on reorganizing the group that will oversee the planning and implementation of the Eastside Rail Corridor. Mayor Stokes was present as a member of the group. The expectation is that the corridor will serve as a high-capacity transit corridor as well as a regional and local bike and pedestrian facility, and that there will be utilities running through it. Most of the scoping work, however, has been focused on the corridor as a recreational facility. Kirkland is ahead of the curve having purchased their section of the corridor a few years ago; they already have an adopted master plan that includes high-capacity transit, a regional paved ped/bike trail, and activated spaces.

Commissioner Lampe reported that he attended both of the Sound Transit open house events on the start of construction for both South Bellevue and Central Bellevue. He said things are ramping up and the South Bellevue park and ride has been closed. SE 4th Street has also been closed and the demolition of condominiums there has begun.

Commissioner Woosley said he recently had opportunity to walk around the new Amazon campus in South Lake Union. He said the bike lanes are integrated into the sidewalks and use a different material and a different color. Something similar might work along Bellevue Way South. Mr. McDonald said the approach will be implemented on Spring Boulevard as well, particularly on the long block between 120th Avenue NE and 124th Avenue NE.

12. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. McDonald reported that he would be sharing with the Bellevue Chamber of Commerce the work done by the Commission regarding multimodal LOS on June 13. He said he made a similar presentation recently to the Wilburton CAC.

Mr. McDonald said he also would be meeting the evening of June 13 with Bellevue Towers residents to talk about downtown development and traffic.

13. COMMISSION CALENDAR

The Commission took a moment to review the calendar of upcoming agenda items, including the items to be discussed at the retreat.

A motion to amend the Commission bylaws to allow the interim chair to serve until the September meeting was made by Commissioner Chirls. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wu and the motion carried unanimously.

14. ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Woosley. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lampe and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Bishop adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Secretary to the Transportation Commission

Date

Chairperson of the Transportation Commission

Date